

Introduced by Senator Chesbro
(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Berg)

February 21, 2006

Senate Joint Resolution No. 23—Relative to veterans.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 23, as introduced, Chesbro. Veterans' Right to Know Act.

This measure would urge the House of Representatives to support and pass the Veterans' Right to Know Act (H.R. 4259), which creates a commission to bring relief to veterans involved in Project 112 and the Shipboard Hazard and Defense Project (Project SHAD) and other instances of chemical or biological testing.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Between 1962 and 1974 the Department of
2 Defense carried out Project 112 and the Shipboard Hazard and
3 Defense Project (Project SHAD), chemical and biological
4 warfare testing projects, until President Nixon halted all
5 biochemical testing; and

6 WHEREAS, The Department of Defense acknowledges that
7 134 tests were planned and 50 executed. Nineteen of these tests
8 were conducted at sea, primarily in the South Pacific and off the
9 coast of Hawaii, and 31 were conducted on land, in Hawaii, the
10 Panama Canal Zone, and Alaska; and

11 WHEREAS, The tests were conducted on approximately 6,000
12 unknowing American military personnel, who, during these tests,
13 were inoculated with a variety of biological and chemical agents.
14 Most of these tests used simulants, like bacillus globiggi, whose
15 molecular structure is similar to anthrax. Some tests, however,
16 used "hot" agents, like VX nerve gas, the most potent of all nerve

1 agents, Sarin gas, a chemical warfare agent classified as a nerve
2 agent, Q Fever, and tularemia, a potentially serious illness whose
3 symptoms include ulcers on the skin or mouth; and

4 WHEREAS, While some knowledge has been gained about
5 the tests since they became public knowledge, key pieces of
6 information are still out of our grasp, including the dosage levels
7 involved and the identities of the exposed veterans; and

8 WHEREAS, In an effort to fully understand the extent of these
9 tests and to provide exposed veterans with proper medical care,
10 United States Representatives Mike Thompson and Denny
11 Rehberg have introduced the Veterans' Right to Know Act (H.R.
12 4259); and

13 WHEREAS, The Veterans' Right to Know Act creates a
14 10-member, bipartisan commission to investigate the chemical or
15 biological warfare tests carried out under Project 112 and Project
16 SHAD and related tests and to provide full notification through
17 the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to those
18 veterans exposed to the tests so that they may receive medical
19 treatment and any potential service-related disability
20 compensation; and

21 WHEREAS, The Veterans' Right to Know Act has received
22 the endorsement of a variety of veterans' service organizations,
23 including the American Legion, the Blinded Veterans
24 Association, the Disabled American Veterans, the Military
25 Officers Association of America, the Military Order of the Purple
26 Heart, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the Veterans of
27 Foreign Wars, and the Vietnam Veterans of America; and

28 WHEREAS, In the words of Vietnam Veterans of America
29 National President, the Veterans' Right to Know Act will "bring
30 the first true measure of justice to potentially tens of thousands of
31 veterans who were subject to toxic exposures in the performance
32 of their military duties"; now, therefore, be it

33 *Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of*
34 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature of the State of California
35 respectfully urges the House of Representatives of the Congress
36 of the United States to support and pass the Veterans' Right to
37 Know Act to bring relief to veterans involved in Project 112 and
38 Project SHAD and other instances of chemical or biological
39 testing; and be it further

1 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
2 this resolution to each Representative in the Congress of the
3 United States.

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